I. Amendments to the Specification

Kindly replace the paragraph beginning at line number 21, on page 7, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Referring now to FIG. 2, the inner sleeve 40 has a first end 42 over which the hose 30 is mounted and a second end 44 that is a termination point or acts to engage other components of the air-conditioning system. An outer diameter 45 of the inner sleeve 40 has outward projections ~~46~~ or serrations 46 that engage and seal against an inner diameter 32 of the hose 30.

Kindly replace the paragraph beginning at line number 4, on page 8, with the following rewritten paragraph:

As shown in FIG. 3, the second end 44 of the inner sleeve 40 is characteristic of a variety of connectors. An example of one type of connector is a quick-connect tubular coupling 70 presently known in the art and described in U.S. Patent No. 4,055,359 to McWethy. The quick-connect tubular coupling 70 illustrated in FIG. 3 requires that the second end 44 of the inner sleeve 40 be flared. The quick-connect tubular coupling 70 includes an annular cage 72 that is axially retained by an annular upset bead 76 and receives the second end 44 of the inner sleeve 40 of the coupling 10. A coil spring 74 is located between the flared second end 44 of the inner sleeve 40 and the annular cage 72. The second end 44 of the inner sleeve 40 is retained between the annular cage 72 and the coil spring 74 of the quick-connect tubular coupling 70. Slight modifications to the second end 44 of the inner sleeve 40 are easily made by one skilled in the art and permit the inner sleeve 40 to be compatible with other tubular connectors.

Kindly replace the paragraph beginning at line number 3, on page 9, with the following rewritten paragraph:

As shown in FIG. 2, the hose 30 is assembled to the coupling 10 by inserting the hose 30 between the inner sleeve 40 and the outer sleeve 60. The outer sleeve 60 has an inner diameter 61 that surrounds an outer diameter 34 of the hose 30. The outward projections 46 on the inner sleeve 40 engage the inner diameter 32 of the hose 30 when the outer sleeve 60 is crimped, using a known method, over the outer diameter 34 of the hose 30 to retain the hose 30 to the coupling 10.

Kindly replace the paragraph beginning at line number 9, on page 9, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The crimping method collapses the outer sleeve 60 and likewise collapses the hose 30 and flows hose material longitudinally outward, thereby forming at least one depression 66 in the outer sleeve 60. Accordingly, the hose 30 is spaced relative to the rest of the ~~hose~~ coupling 10 to permit free longitudinal flow of the hose material during crimping. Consequently, the hose material is axially retained by the depression 66 and the outward projections 46 to prevent axial or longitudinal movement relative to the ~~hose~~ coupling 10 and inner sleeve 40.

Kindly replace the paragraph beginning at line number 9, on page 10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

According to the preferred embodiment, the reinforcing ring 20 is made of a rigid material, such as steel, but may be made of any other suitable material such as nylon or plastic. The width of the reinforcing ring 20 is only that that is necessary to support the inner

sleeve 40 concentric with the area of peak crimp force 36. The reinforcing ring 20 is as discrete as possible and is therefore not subject to beam deflection as are reinforcements of the prior art.

Kindly replace the paragraph beginning at line number 15, on page 10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Still referring to Fig. 2, the outer diameter of the reinforcing ring 20 is slightly larger than the inner diameter 50 of the inner sleeve 40. The reinforcing ring 20 is press fit into the inner diameter 50 of the inner sleeve 40. The press-fit may be controlled by a stop on a mandrel press (not shown), to ensure the reinforcing ~~member~~ ring 20 is properly located within the inner sleeve 40.

Kindly replace the paragraph beginning at line number 5, on page 11, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Preferably, the inner sleeve 40' is formed with the reinforcing ring 20 intact prior to final assembly of the hose coupling 10'. Here, the reinforcing ring 20 is larger in diameter than the inner diameter 50' of the inner sleeve 40'. Thus, the reinforcing ring 20 is press fit into the inner sleeve 40' to a predetermined location, then the inner sleeve 40' is collapsed inwardly around the reinforcing ring 20.

Kindly replace the paragraph beginning at line number 18, on page 11, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Further, because the reinforcing ring concentrates support in a specific area, it provides more concentrated support than a much longer reinforcement, due to cumulative

beam deflection in the longer reinforcement. A longer reinforcement, such as those provided in the prior art, decreases the reinforcement in localized areas where it is needed and unnecessarily reinforces areas that do not require reinforcement, adding unnecessary weight and cost to the coupling. In contrast, an advantage of the small width of the reinforcing ring of the present invention is that it minimizes or eliminates the disruption of the flow of fluid through the hose coupling compared to the reinforcements of prior art coupling ~~connections~~ connections.